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ABSTRACT

This study examined the extent to which issues related to internationalization were considered in institutional policy development at universities, along with the underlying reasons why such issues were considered. A written and telephone survey was conducted with trustees from seven state-supported universities in four states. Two state legislators from each state with an interest in higher education were also interviewed. The results indicated that little actual trustee business time was spent on policy-making related to internationalization. However, five of the seven trustees interviewed indicated that they spent a moderate to greater than moderate amount of time discussing institutional globalization outside of board meetings. All eight state legislators indicated that economic development interests were a primary rationale for internationalization. However, six of the legislators indicated that while universities had been quite effective in connecting globalization endeavors to economic development initiatives, they had been significantly less effective in demonstrating the benefits of internationalization for intellectual or cultural benefit. Suggestions for universities on how to educate policymakers about the benefits of internationalization are included. (Contains 21 references.) (MDM)

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The Challenges of Globalizing Higher Education in a Parochial Policy-Making Environment

Dan L. King

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The Challenges Of Globalizing Higher Education In A Parochial Policy-Making Environment

The globalization and internationalization of American higher education has been a well-articulated goal for decades. Presumably, the efforts of individuals and—consequently—of institutions to develop broadened perspectives are driven by multiple factors. Among these are the well-intentioned and altruistic desires of faculty and administrators to enhance the educational perspectives which are imparted to enrolled students. In addition, some personnel support the broadening of perspective as simply being a fundamental role of higher education. Each of these motivating sets impacts internal college and university cultures and structures in a way that encourages the enhancement of internationalization. Each is legitimately associated with a principle-driven desire to engage the college community in a global dialogue.

Developments in communication technology over the past two decades have reinforced the desire and need for academicians to communicate on a world-wide basis. As the quality and availability of this communication increases, the likelihood of faculty demanding an even greater internationalized perspective will also increase. In Hansen and Meyer's book (1995), Steven Muller states,

> *"(G)eographic distance, national borders, and—at least to some degree—even language barriers no longer present significant obstacles to the international movement of intellectual capital, especially to the instantaneous communication of data. If there is indeed a marketplace for intellectual capital, that marketplace is truly global and appears to be extending into space as well. While the nation-state remains the standard form of large-scale human social organization, it has already been substantially eroded by the commercial and financial markets. With the end of the Cold War, the advanced technological societies of the information age seem to be well on the road toward a single global marketplace of ideas, data, and communication."* (p. 65.)

The Status Quo

A written and telephone survey was conducted with trustees of seven different state-supported universities, located in four different states. (In all cases but one, the trustee interviewed was currently serving as chair of the board. In the single exception, the chair was unavailable and the interview was conducted with the vice chair.) The purposes of this survey were to determine the extent to which issues related to internationalization were considered in institutional policy-development and the underlying reasons such issues were considered. The results of the survey indicated that little actual trustee business time was spent on policy-making related to internationalization. However, five of the seven trustees interviewed indicated that they spent a moderate to greater than moderate amount of time discussing institutional globalization outside of board meetings. These individuals appeared to take very seriously their leadership responsibility to broaden their respective institution's international presence. However, in every case, one or two of the following reasons were cited for this activity:

> (1) Efforts to internationalize were closely coupled with state and/or local economic development endeavors; and/or
>
> (2) Efforts to internationalize were seen as a means of increasing the pool of potential student applicants.

There was no discussion of internationalizing because of intellectual and or socio-cultural benefits. There was no discussion of the need to internationalize because of an increasingly interrelated global perspective or because of the need to be able to better communicate in a shrinking world. The driving force was economic ... exclusively, economic.

Two legislators were surveyed from each of the four states from which the previously described trustee interviews were conducted. These legislators were selected upon the recommendation of the trustee interviewees as being persons of knowledge and interest in higher

education, with a special interest in internationalization of post-secondary education in the particular state. The purpose of these brief surveys was to determine whether there was a perception of particularly effective rationale that colleges and universities could put forward to capture support for international efforts. In every case, the legislators reported that economic development interests were a significantly greater consideration than were intellectual or other cultural benefits. However, six of the legislators interviewed reported the belief that colleges/universities has been quite effective in connecting globalization endeavors to economic development initiatives and that they had been significantly less effective in demonstrating the benefits of internationalizing for intellectual or socio-cultural affairs. Each of these six expressed the belief that it would be possible to demonstrate non-economically driven benefits. They all expressed the belief that doing so could result in significantly increased legislative support for international efforts.

Four of the eight legislators interviewed expressed concern over some perceived public criticism of internationalized perspectives on college/university campuses. Each of these four referred to multiple expressions of concern from constituents regarding foreign-born professors who "have difficulty with English." However, in each case, the legislators reported a personal perceived benefit from the international perspective brought to campus by these professors. They expressed dissatisfaction with college/university administrators who fail to capitalize on the cross-cultural expertise of international faculty, and were further critical of administrators who fail to differentiate teaching assignments in a manner which mitigate English language difficulty. In each case, the legislators reported that colleges and universities are not engaging in internal and external strategies which would reduce criticism and actual build support for an internationalized faculty.

Educate the Policy-Makers

Public institutions of higher education need to educate their own internal policy-making personnel (e.g., trustees) as well as the state legislators who influence post-secondary education policy-development. While it is beneficial to accept support for international endeavors that is evident because of both perceived and real economic development outcomes, the intellectual and socio-cultural purposes of internationalization are also quite valid and deserve support in their own right. The following suggestions are offered:

1. Establish a campus-wide faculty/administrative group whose primary purpose is to provide leadership for expanding the global perspectives on campus.

2. Identify one or two college/university trustees who will serve as a liaison between this group and the campus policy-makers. (While it is important to consider identifying trustees who are interested in internationalizing the campus, it is more important to select those which will not approach this endeavor from a singular perspective. Thus, the appointment of someone just because he/she does business in a foreign country may lead to consideration of globalization from only an economic development perspective. It would be better to identify a liaison with less initial knowledge but who has an interest and is willing to consider multiple perspectives of internationalization.)

3. Charge this campus group with developing an educational plan for both the college/university trustees as well as key members of the state legislature. It is important for legislators to be fully versed on all benefits of internationalization, not just the economic development benefits.

4. Provide higher-echelon administrative support for internationalizing the college campus. Ensure that the underlying rationale for this internationalization is both intellectual and economic.

5. Make sure that everyone on campus as well as external constituents are fully versed in the benefits of globalization that devolve to the institution, to its students/faculty, to members in the local community, and to the broader community which supports the institution.

Conclusions

Policy-makers at two levels—institution trustees and state legislators—expressed a belief that college/university internationalization endeavors are too limited in scope. That is, such activities may indeed significantly contribute to economic development and/or enrollment enhancement but that parallel benefits may devolve from internationalization that is achieved for intellectual and/or non-economic socio-cultural ends. These policy-makers stressed the need for institutions to sensitize both trustees and legislators to these alternative benefits of internationalization activities.

In short, the trustees and legislators stressed the benefits of continuing the present economically-related activities as being in the enlightened self-interest of the institution and challenged college/university administrators to expand internationalization activities and improve the strategies for publicly communicating the rationale for college/university internationalization.

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